

NEW MUSIC CONCERTS

Artistic Director ROBERT AITKEN

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21st season

new music

C O N C E R T S

Sunday, April 5, 1992
8 p.m.
DuMaurier Theatre
Harbourfront

Sir Harrison Birtwistle *Ritual Fragment* (11')

Doug Stewart, flute, Cynthia Steljes, oboe
Stanley McCartney, clarinet, Fraser Jackson, bassoon
James MacDonald, horn, Michael White, trumpet
Gerry Johnson, bass trumpet, Marc Widner, piano
Trevor Tureski, bass drum
Fujiko Imajishi, Marie Berard, violins
Doug Perry, viola, David Hetherington, cello
Roberto Occhipinti, double bass

Sir Harrison Birtwistle *Songs By Myself* (10')

(North American première)

Valdine Anderson, soprano

Doug Stewart, flute/alto flute, Marc Widner, piano

Trevor Tureski, vibraphone, Fujiko Imajishi, violin

Doug Perry, viola, David Hetherington, cello

Roberto Occhipinti, double bass

Sir Harrison Birtwistle, conductor

Keith Hamel *Paraphrases* (8'15")

(World première)

Doug Stewart, flute, Stanley McCartney, clarinet

James MacDonald, horn, Boyd MacDonald, fortepiano

Fujiko Imajishi, violin, David Hetherington, cello

Trevor Tureski, timpani

Robert Aitken, conductor

Sir Harrison Birtwistle

***Four Poems by Jaan Kaplinski* (12')**

(North American première)

Valdine Anderson, soprano

Doug Stewart, flute, Cynthia Steljes, oboe

Stanley McCartney, clarinet, Fraser Jackson, bassoon

James MacDonald, horn, James Spragg, trumpet

Marc Widner, piano, Janice Dann, harp

Fujiko Imajishi, Marie Berard, violins

Doug Perry, viola, David Hetherington, cello

Roberto Occhipinti, double bass

Sir Harrison Birtwistle, conductor

Intermission

Sir Harrison Birtwistle *Secret Theatre* (28')

Doug Stewart, flute/piccolo, Cynthia Steljes, oboe

Stanley McCartney, clarinet, Fraser Jackson, bassoon

James MacDonald, horn, James Spragg, trumpet

Gerry Johnson, trombone, Trevor Tureski, percussion

Marc Widner, piano

Fujiko Imaishi, Marie Berard, violins

Doug Perry, viola, David Hetherington, cello

Roberto Occhipinti, doublebass

Robert Aitken, conductor

New Music Concerts gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the British Council in making Sir Harrison Birtwistle's appearance possible.

This concert is being recorded for future broadcast on the CBC programme *Two New Hours*.

A handwritten musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". The score is written on ten staves, organized into five systems of two staves each. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals), and dynamic markings (mf, ff, p). The melody is written on the upper staff of each system, while the lower staff contains accompaniment, including chords and bass lines. The handwriting is in ink on aged, slightly yellowed paper. The title "The Rose Tree" is written in a decorative, cursive font at the top center of the page. The overall style is that of a personal or working manuscript.

His opera *Punch and Judy* (1966) has been hailed as one of the most important of the century after a performance by the London Sinfonietta conducted by David Atherton and also recorded by Decca. The work received a highly successful revival by Opera Factory London. For his

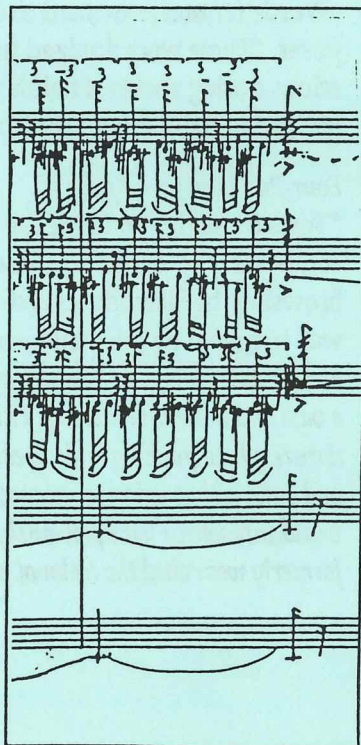
second opera *The Mask of Orpheus*, a major project which was performed at the English National Opera in 1986, he received the Grawemeyer Award from the University of Louisville, Kentucky and the Evening Standard Opera Award. His most recent opera, *Gawain*, was commissioned by the Royal Opera House and first performed there in May 1991. He is currently writing a piano concerto commissioned by the Philharmonia Orchestra which they will perform in Paris and London with Mitsuko Uchida and Pierre Boulez in 1993.

His academic appointments include Visiting Fellow of Princeton University, Harkness Fellow at the University of Colorado, Boulder, Visiting Professor of Music at Swarthmore College, Pennsylvania, and Visiting Slee Professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He was Associate Director, Music at the National Theatre, London from 1976-88. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Academy of Music and a member of the Akademie der Kunst, Berlin. In 1986 he was made Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres by the French Government. He was knighted in 1988.

Important commissions include: *Verses for Ensembles* (1969), commissioned by the London Sinfonietta and recorded by Decca, *Meridian* (1971) also commissioned by the London Sinfonietta, *The Triumph of Time* (1972) for the Royal Philharmonic and subsequently performed by the Chicago Symphony and New York Philharmonic Orchestras, as well as by the BBC Symphony Orchestra who recorded the piece with Pierre Boulez for Decca/Argo and *Silbury Air* (1977) commissioned by the Koussevitsky Foundation, first performed by the London Sinfonietta and later by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in New York.

Other important works include *Secret Theatre* (1984) for the London Sinfonietta, *Still Movement* (1984) for the London Festival, *Earth Dances* (1986) a major symphonic work for the BBC, *Endless Parade* (1987) commissioned by Paul Sacher, *Machaut à ma manière* (1988) for the Hamburg Staatsorchester and *Salford Toccata* (1988) for brass band.

Birtwistle's work at the National Theatre includes music theatre projects such as *Bow*



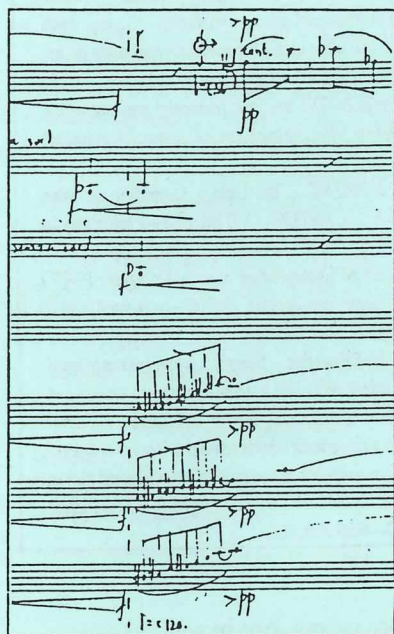
Down and *The Oresteia*, also seen on Channel Four television. His association with the National Theatre has led to fruitful collaboration with the poet Tony Harrison, who has been involved in several of Birtwistle's recent compositions, including *agm* (1979), commissioned by the Ensemble Intercontemporain and conducted by Pierre Boulez, and *Yan Tan Tethera* (1984).

Songs by Myself

This group of setting (for soprano and flute, violin, viola, cello, double bass, piano and vibraphone) is simply what its title suggests: songs set to poems written by Birtwistle. "Words for music are hard to come by," writes the composer. "These were dredged from the silt of my subconscious during spates of holiday melancholy on the island of Symi in the southern Dodecanese in the spring of 1983."

Four Poems by Jaan Kaplinski

"Texts for setting to music are hard to come by," writes the composer. "I came across these poems of Kaplinski while browsing the Harrods book department, and my interest was triggered by this statement by the poet: 'To occupy oneself with biology and nature in practice as well as in theory is a vast and noble undertaking. This begins with the observation of nature: photographing birds, feeding animals, describing plants; and ends with a universal science of nature which transforms the world into what I have previously called Utopia, and what formerly was called the realm of peace, the Golden Age.'"



Ritual Fragment (1990)
 “*Ritual Fragment* continues a line of development set up in three of my other pieces written for the London Sinfonietta (*Carmen Arcadiæ Mechanix Perpetuum*, *Silbury Air* and *Secret Theatre*). It uses the melodic element of *Secret Theatre* to make more explicit the idea of instrumental role-playing, each instrument having its own music, and it is the opposite to the first piece (*Carmen Arcadiæ*)

which is vertical in concept and almost without any melodic context.”—h.b.

Ritual Fragment is dedicated to the memory of Michael Vyner and was first performed at the Concert for Michael Vyner at the Royal Opera House, on 6 May 1990.

Secret Theatre
 With this new
 substantial piece
 for fourteen
 instruments
 Birtwistle
 completes a
 trilogy of scores
 all commis-
 sioned by the
 London
 Sinfonietta,
 which began
 with *Silbury Air*
 (1977) and
 continued with
Carmen Arcadiæ
Mechanicæ
Perpetuum (1978).

Secret Theatre has
 familial relationships with both these pieces, but in several
 aspects it also relates back to *Verses for Ensembles* (1969)
 and even to *Tragœdia* (1965).

Tragœdia was the score in which Birtwistle first employed
 the forms of Greek drama to lend an internal rigour and

(Notes made by Harrison Birtwistle prior to composing
Secret Theatre):

First things—instrumentation—instrumentation of London Sinfonietta,
 remember that Schoenberg's Chamber Symphony sounds overscored in
 chamber version (underscored in orchestral version).—No real bass, single
 strings versus centre register winds. Imbalance between single strings and
 brass. Back of the head ideas can become foreground material by committing
 them to paper no matter how crude.—Basic idea (not back of head) music
 which is divided into two of its most basic elements vertical/horizontal, or
 melody/accompaniment—not good analogy as it suggests one element—
 melody of course being more important than the accompaniment! divide
 the ensemble maybe in performance (nothing antiphonal)—... important.
 Maybe the instruments that make up the horizontal element could change
 during the performance (beware, not too much coming and going)—maybe
 they could stand? Perhaps!?!—The two parts (elements) need not have a
 direct one to one relationship. More like two beings in the same labyrinth (not
 lost I hope)

MELODY/ACCOMPANIMENT ... bad analogy, suggesting one more
 important than the other ... CANTUS/CONTINUUM—a better way to
 think—a bit academic maybe—important—think, explore notion—FORE-
 GROUND/BACKGROUND (juxtaposition of opposites again) FORE-
 GROUND must not always be assigned to CANTUS—question if there is
 a FOREGROUND/BACKGROUND what would be the
 MIDDLEGROUND? think about this ... thought ... a brain moves forward
 ... if the CANTUS is made or performed by more than one instrument and
 must not be in any way contrapuntal, then it will consist of several
 instruments speaking as a single voice (choral unison). Make list of types of
 unison later ... Individual single voices (single instruments) could play in
 the CONTINUUM reducing the CANTUS from maybe, FOREGROUND
 to MIDDLEGROUND—think about this.

Even as I scribble the idea of the CANTUS seems to be the primary consideration (must fight this)—It must not be reduced to a constant role of background. Each of their journeys must be as eventful as the other. List of unisons Ostinato list A —link with CONTINUUM (important)—important why? Maybe obvious but state it clearly. CONTINUUM equals textural music (rhythmic development) CANTUS equals horizontal music (melodic development) CONTINUUM to be made up from invented ostinato forms, plus solos. Question—at what point does an ostinato cease to function as such, due to the number of notes present in it? or the amount of time for it to register as a repeat—Why mention this?—Ostinato into melody perhaps—Examine, work out, remember, working procedures for invented ostinatos,—contrapuntal ostinatos etc.—Having done this, hide it or lose it so that it won't become precompositional Things becoming a little clearer, but one area mentioned before cannot be left—if the instruments of the CANTUS are going to change during the course of the piece, and there are to be solos in the CONTINUUM then some sort of instrumental role playing is implied—this is interesting. The role playing could move on a totally different plane to that of the ideas of FOREGROUND/MIDDLEGROUND/BACKGROUND, a sort of independent strata (this is more than just interesting)—important do not precompose the idea of ROLE PLAYING, Let any logic in that direction come out of the composed context—it should make a sort of hidden drama on an independent level Like a secret theatre

(The ideas set down in these random jottings do not necessarily appear in the finished composition.—h.b.)

tension to an abstract musical form. Greek drama itself had its origins in religious ritual, and ritual in its broadest sense has informed many of his major works, from the schematised violence of *Punch and Judy* through the instrumental theatricality of *Verses* to the two operas, *The Mask of Orpheus* and *Yan Tan Tethera*. But in *Secret Theatre* the ritual

is implicit rather than explicit; the audience is admitted to a rite for which it knows no justification; the instrumental protagonists operate according to hidden rules. Though the music remains entirely self-contained and may be fully appreciated as an abstract musical argument, the mystery of its origins provides an added fascination, gives it "magic." the title comes from a poem by Robert Graves of

the same name, in which the poet promises "an unforeseen and fiery entertainment."

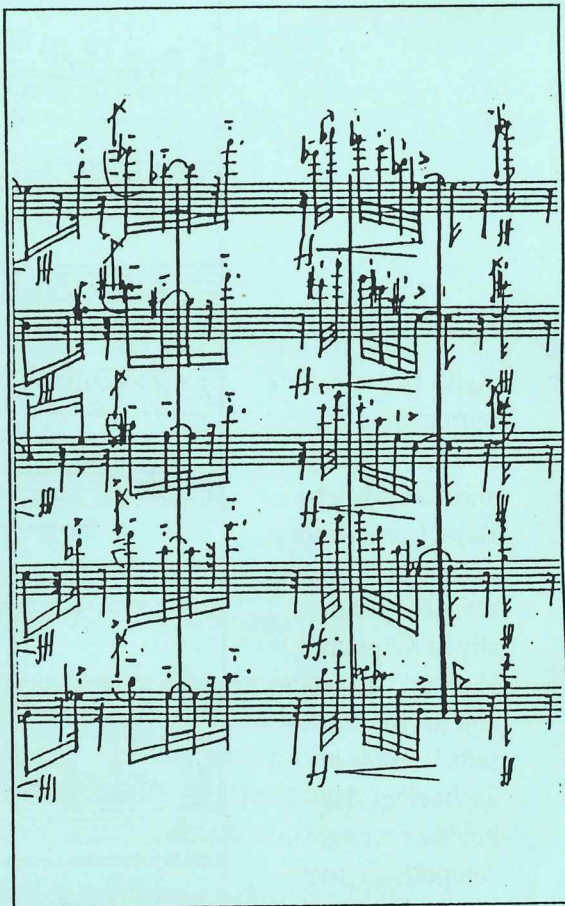
To act out this suppressed scenario Birtwistles divides the chamber orchestra into two groups, designated Cantus and Continuum. The Cantus instrumentalists play from solo positions at the front of the ensemble; flute, oboe and clarinet are more or less constant members of this group, though at certain moments they are absorbed (musically and physically) back into the Continuum. Conversely the Cantus is sometimes augmented by the trumpet, horn, or two violins. The music of the Cantus is essentially linear, and its instruments play throughout in unison, whether it be "direct" unison, rhythmic unison, or heterophonic unison, when the melodic line unravels into distinct strands. By contrast the material for the Continuum is conceived vertically; the music is built out of an array of ostinatos, interlocked and superimposed.

In a very obvious sense the music of *Secret Theatre* is a vast exploitation of the time-honoured principle of melody and accompaniment, with the endless song of the Cantus underpinned by the incessant clockworks of the Continuum. But the word "accompaniment" implies a subsidiary role, and this is very much the role-playing of equals. The Continuum frequently becomes highly complex and threatens to overwhelm the melody instruments; elsewhere, as if to emphasise their importance and independ-

ence, soloists emerge from the ranks of the Continuum with their own extravagant displays, oblivious to the song of the Cantus.

Here then is both a continuation and an elaboration of the musical worlds of *Silbury Air* and *Carmen*

Arcadia, one which takes them into an unprecedentedly complex world. The juxtaposed mechanisms of *Carmen* are multiplied into the Continuum, while the disjunct solos which constantly threaten to disrupt the even flow of *Silbury Air* are extended into something far more sustained and self-contained.—Andrew Clements



Keith Hamel was born in Morden, Manitoba in 1956, and studied at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, at Queen's University in Kingston, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He holds a doctorate in composition from Harvard University.

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ff *mf*

mf *p* *mf*

f *f*

mp

p *mf*

mp *subito f*

Hamel has written both acoustic and electroacoustic music and has been awarded many prizes in both media. He has been commissioned by Boulez's Ensemble Intercontemporain, Vancouver New Music, Elektra Women's choir and many others. His music has been performed

and broadcast in Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

Hamel is also well known as a developer of computer software for music, and is a member of the Canadian Electroacoustic Community. He is currently professor of composition and director of the electroacoustic music studio at the University of British Columbia.

"Paraphrases was written in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death. Although my normal compositional method is Beethovenian (I painstakingly rework my music and frown a lot), I decided that, as a tribute to Mozart, I would conceive of the piece as a whole and simply write it out—(the Mozartean approach).

Paraphrases was composed and notated in one weekend. I chose to write for an ensemble of instruments that would have been familiar to Mozart, and composed the piece in a minimalist style. The harmonic material is derived from a pair of Mozart phrases (yes, the pun was intentional—I think Mozart would have liked it—the pun that is)." —k.h.

Excellent team work is essential in the successful realization of New Music Concert's high artistic goals. Now into our twenty-first season, we are blessed with an abundance of musical resource in Toronto. On behalf of our entire organization and all our subscribers, I want to personally thank the many superb musical artists listed below who participated last year in our twentieth successful season.

Joseph Macerollo
President, New Music Concerts

John Abram, Dianne Aitken, Robert Aitken, Valdine Anderson, Battery Park: Bill Brennan—Paul Houle—Blair Mackay—John Thompson, Julie Baumgard, Marie Berard, Daniel Blackman, Nancy Bourdon-Nelson, Andrew Burashko, Christopher Butterfield, The Contemporary Brass: James Gardiner—Michael White—Jenny Wilson—Alistair Kay—

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New Music Concerts wishes to thank those who have generously volunteered their time and services:

Sharon Howting, André Leduc and Juanita Jones.

Programme design and production by Peeter Tammearu and Daniel Foley.

To celebrate its 20th anniversary season in 1990-1991, **new music concerts** has released a compact disc. The programme features: Robert Aitken—*Shadows III*; Norma Beecroft—*Jeu II* and *Troissonts*; Gilles Tremblay—*Triojubilus*; Iannis Xenakis—*Waarg*. The cost is \$18, plus applicable taxes.

new music concerts also offers for sale a small number of copies of a limited edition of a poster by the late Harold Town to celebrate John Weinzwieg's 70th birthday in 1983. The posters are numbered and signed by both the artist and the composer.

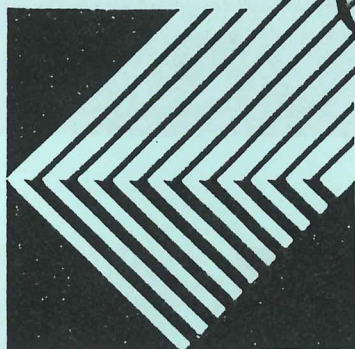
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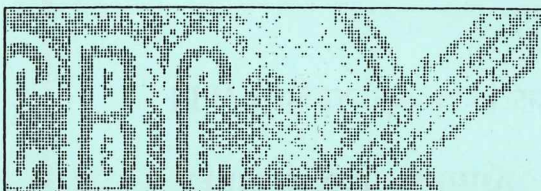
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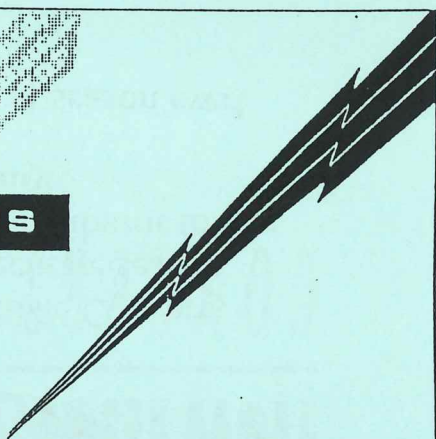
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on its 21st consecutive season
as a significant contributor to our
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LE DIMANCHE À 21 H 05**



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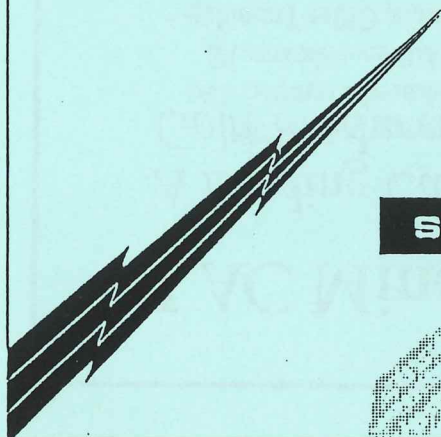
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